

**CONFIDENTIAL**

**HOW SHOULD THE U.S. REACT IF THE USSR BREAKS OFF  
DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS?**

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If the USSR breaks off relations with the U.S., our representation in the USSR would be eliminated. In the U.S., Soviet Embassy and Antorg personnel would be eliminated, but the permanent Soviet, Ukrainian and Byelorussian UN Missions, augmented during sessions of the General Assembly by the GA delegations of the three, would remain. There would also be a problem with Soviet newsmen attending Assembly sessions. Presumably, all would be restricted to Manhattan Island. The diplomats would, however, be available as a channel of communication for either side.

Our possible counter-actions appear limited in scope and would depend to a considerable degree upon the prevailing overall situation. Of itself, this Soviet action would heighten international tensions, and the situation of the moment should dictate whether we would wish to take any type of retaliatory action which would serve to heighten tensions still further.

**Actions we could take**

There are really only two basic actions that would appear pertinent: we could

1. Sever relations with the Soviet bloc countries with which we maintain relations.

2. Urge our allies to do likewise and to break with the USSR.

Short of these extremes, there are more limited actions we could take, such as withdrawing our Chiefs of Mission from bloc countries, ordering home our dependents from these countries, reducing our staffs, restricting travel by bloc diplomats in the U.S., or any combination of the above coupled with urging our allies to follow suit.

With regard to the first possible course of action, it seems probable that the bloc countries would in any case follow the Soviet example, although one country, such as Poland, might refrain in order to maintain a diplomatic channel of communications between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., protect the interests of the other bloc countries and perform intelligence functions which, however limited, could be valuable in reporting needs, diplomatic gossip, observed civil defense measures and the like.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR

**Recommended**

REVIEWED by MBH/NT DATE 3/5/68

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Recommended Course of Action

We believe it would be desirable to await action by any bloc country and not take the initiative of breaking off relations with it. The onus for this action would thus rest on the regime in question which could be psychologically important vis-a-vis the peoples of the country and the world at large. (The disposition of Cardinal Mindszenty would be a special problem in Hungary.) Whether or not it appeared desirable to evacuate dependants from bloc countries should depend on the overall situation and not be undertaken solely in retaliation for the Soviet action. This and other actions such as recalling Chiefs of Mission would, in any case, have minimal impact. Any of these actions should be decided on a case-by-case basis.

Should the U.S.S.R. break off relations with the U.S. and induce its bloc partners to do likewise, one objective would seem to be to give the appearance that the U.S. was being isolated over the Cuban issue. This assumption would be heightened if the U.S.S.R. and its partners failed to take similar action against another Western country. In this instance, it might be desirable to seek to induce retaliatory action by certain Western states. States which might be considered for such an approach would be those Latin American countries maintaining diplomatic relations with bloc countries and our NATO allies. With regard to the Latin American countries, a determination should be made that all Latin American countries in this category would be prepared to take the desired action; otherwise, the solid Latin American backing obtained in the OAS on the U.S. quarantine action would appear to be cracking. Similar considerations should be applied to the NATO partnership. In addition, however, more compelling considerations would appear relevant in the latter case.

Unless we were on the brink of war, it would hardly be desirable to press our NATO allies to break relations thereby cutting off all meaningful channels of communication except for the UN and the contacts it affords. Moreover, it can be assumed that some, at least, of our NATO allies would strongly resist any such pressures on our part. They would feel that any such concerted action would greatly and unnecessarily heighten tensions and limit their ability to serve in the particular role which some are bound to be thinking about. Similarly, an intelligence gathering function by those of our allies with the necessary capability would, however circumscribed, be of considerable value, to say nothing of the diplomatic conversations which our allies would inevitably have with bloc leaders on subjects of great interest to us.